



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
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Reaction to County Board Budget

By Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker

The members of the Milwaukee County Board passed their version of a county budget on Monday, November 6 on a 14 - 5 vote. The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million. My original budget had a 0% increase in the tax levy.

What did the County Board "buy" with the additional \$9 million of your money?

The County Board budget raises the property tax levy by nearly \$9 million to fund a \$49 million pension contribution – without taking any action to curb the future growth of this obligation. Worse, they took the savings in 2007 from the use of a Pension Obligation Bond (POB) without making a final commitment to approve one.

My original budget stopped the growth of the pension liability with the use of POBs (like the State of Wisconsin and some 150 other governments). And unlike the County Board budget, we don't wait for another committee.

What else did the County Board buy with the additional \$9 million of your money?

They bought more government jobs.

I saved millions by outsourcing things like housekeeping, maintenance, lawn mowing, fleet parts and maintenance to maintain important services, but at a much lower cost. I'd rather have the savings to put into public safety and quality of life programs than into more government jobs that draw a pension.

The County Board spent an additional \$9 million of your money on an outdated aquatics system. Not only did they keep nearly all of the pools open, but they are also pouring money into pools that were built as far back as the 1930s.

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My original budget called for moving pools into the 21st century. All across America, parks systems are moving to aquatic centers and splash pads and away from deep well pools and wading pools.

The County Board spent an additional \$9 million of your money to fund other odd items like restoring county funds on the Farm and Fish Hatchery for inmates at the House of Correction.

My original budget did not waste tax dollars on programs that do not show real benefit. Inmates already have a chance to work on projects like a printing press and welding - areas that have practical uses in the real world and that actually save the county money.

In spite of raising the property tax levy by nearly \$9 million, the County Board gave you and me a budget that will blow up early in 2007. They restored over 100 positions without including adequate funding for the entire year. The County Board budget depends on the unions agreeing to big givebacks, which is like buying a bigger house with the hope that you'll win the lottery.

In other words, the County Board budget will be out of balance early in 2007.

My original budget included some tough choices, but it was balanced for 2007 and it included actions that put this County in a stronger fiscal position for the future.

What did the County Board buy with the nearly \$9 million of your money?

Not very much. In addition to raising property taxes by nearly \$9 million, the County Board budget is not balanced for 2007 and it fails to adequately address the legacy costs of the county, which are eating up our budget like a virus. Thankfully, I have a BIG veto pen and I plan on using it to protect the taxpayers of Milwaukee County.

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